

OBSTACLE CHALLENGES *Amended 12.11.2017*

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The purpose of the Obstacle Challenge Program is to promote good horsemanship skills and provide an educational venue for members of CSHA. Obstacle Challenges are open to any breed of horse or any style of riding. The Horse and Rider will encounter various obstacles and sometimes challenging situations which will better prepare the horse and rider to negotiate them with accuracy. Through education and experience, riding becomes more pleasurable. Each Obstacle Challenge will encourage education, safety and fun.

SEC. 1.0 Committee and Responsibilities

1.1 The State Committee will administer this program. If necessary, in addition to the members prescribed in the bylaws, additional committee members may be appointed by the chairman to carry out specific duties. However, they will not have voting privileges nor are they counted in obtaining a quorum.

1.1.1 The State Chairman shall appoint an Event Chairman for purposes of managing the State Obstacle Challenge Championship (SOCC).

1.2 It is the State Chairman's responsibility to ascertain that regions requesting sanctioning are provided with necessary information such as sanctioning forms, program guidelines, result forms, etc.

1.3 The State Chairman will keep accurate record of all Obstacle Challenges throughout CSHA.

SEC. 2.0 General Rules

2.1 Whenever the term horse is used, it also applies to ponies and mules.

2.2 Whenever the male gender is used, it also applies to the female gender.

2.3 All Obstacle Challenges may be performed inside an arena or outside.

2.3.1 At each obstacle event management shall, wherever possible and feasible, provide for a suitable and safe means of bypassing the obstacle while providing a smooth transition to the next obstacle.

2.3.2 Obstacles may be manmade or those that naturally occur on a trail.

2.4 Horses may be of any breed or age. It is strongly recommended that horses be at least three (3) years of age. It is the rider's responsibility to ascertain if his horse is capable of competing.

2.5 No special consideration will be given to unsound or handicapped horses. A rider with a temporary or permanent disability must advise the Ride Management during the riders' meeting.

2.6 Ownership of a horse is not required.

2.7 Any type of cruelty to animals such as excessive use of spurs, crops, etc. will be penalized. If the abuse continues the rider will be disqualified and excused from the competition.

2.8 Events are open to non-CSHA members.

2.9 Each rider is responsible for his own safety and the safety of his mount. Earned points and resulting awards are to be considered secondary to safety.

2.10 Each participant must maintain control of their mount throughout the ride. Each obstacle is judged on how the partnership works together. This working team should negotiate each obstacle with calmness and patience, moving safely through the obstacle. Horses should show awareness, be attentive and not spook, shy or spin

2.11 Riding double or with a loose foal on the side is not allowed.

2.12 Any person under eighteen (18) years must have written consent of a parent or guardian in order to participate in any sanctioned Obstacle Challenge.

2.13 All sanctioned Obstacle Challenges shall be conducted according to the state rules and guidelines.

2.14 Obstacle Challenges are an event negotiated on a designed course for all competitors. Judging begins when the horse and rider enter the course and continues until the last obstacle has been completed. Schooling between obstacles will result in a disqualification for the next obstacle. Obstacle Challenges are meant to be ridden in a continuous motion. However, a slight hesitation to acknowledge the obstacle is acceptable. Riders must ride the same horse for the entire designated course.

2.15 Riders may compete in a sanctioned Obstacle Challenge that is not in their region. If the rider's home region has a high point program, that region's program rules will determine how points and placing are earned for "Out of Region" rides.

2.16 No contestant shall in any manner challenge an obstacle judge in any way that devalues their integrity. Any contestant doing so will be disqualified for that event and lose that ride counting toward SOCC qualification.

2.17 During the Pilot Program: Rule changes can be made to the program at any time during the first two (2) years. Resolutions must be done for the third and final year of the Pilot Program.

SEC. 3.0 Program Registration/Fees

3.1 Each rider must complete an official Registration/Release Form. Registration fee(s) will be determined by the Event Management. Sign up time, starting time and extra activities will be posted on the website. There may be additional rules posted on the event website.

3.2 CSHA membership is required and must be kept current to participate in SOCC and Region Programs.

3.3 Each horse and rider combination competing at a sanctioned Obstacle Challenge will be charged a \$3.00 State Obstacle Challenge Rider Fee. These fees shall be sent to the state office for deposit no later than one (1) week after Obstacle Challenge.

3.4 In order to participate in a Region High Point Program, a rider shall submit a Region Program Registration Form and fees to the Region Chairman.

3.5 All fees are due and payable prior to any ride at which the program member desires to receive credit towards SOCC eligibility.

3.6 There is no limit as to the number of animals an individual may compete on. However only one (1) horse and rider combination per category may qualify to ride at the SOCC.

SEC. 4.0 Categories

4.1 There will be six (6) categories: Advanced, Intermediate, Novice, Youth, In Hand, and Assisted Rider.

4.1.a A horse can only be entered in one (1) category other than Assisted Rider where the same horse can be ridden multiple times.

4.1.b The Assisted Rider category will always go last.

4.1.1 Definition of Categories:

4.1.1.1 Advanced: A rider and horse combination who can no longer qualify for Intermediate or any competitor that wants to advance from Intermediate.

4.1.1.2 Intermediate: A rider and horse combination who has not placed first at the SOCC for more than two (2) years, or a rider has declined to participate at the SOCC, any rider and horse combination who has not placed first in the region for more than two (2) years. Or any competitor that wants to advance from Novice. Exception will be that if only one (1) person is showing in the Intermediate category that win will not count as a second win having to advance to the higher category.

4.1.1.3 Novice: A rider and horse combination who has not placed first at the SOCC for more than three (3) years, or a rider has declined to participate at the SOCC, any rider and horse combination who has not placed first in the region for more than three (3) years. Exception will be that if only one (1) person is showing in the Novice category that win will not count as a third win having to advance to the higher category.

4.1.1.4 Youth: Youth competitors are seventeen (17) years old and under as of January 1 of the current year All youths must wear an ATSM/SEI approved equestrian helmet. They can have an adult on course as support, but no coaching is allowed. Youth riders must have an adult at the arena, not on the course, to be able to respond to a judge's request to have someone handle the horse.

4.1.1.5 In Hand: Any horse not shown in any other category other than Assisted Rider can be shown In Hand (saddled or unsaddled). Horse can only be shown at the Novice level. At this time, In Hand is not eligible for SOCC.

4.1.1.6 Assisted Rider: All assisted rider and horse combinations shall be accompanied by an adult on foot which may verbally assist, and/or use a Lead Line. Assisted Riders are not eligible for SOCC. All Assisted Riders must wear an ATSM/SEI approved equestrian helmet.

4.2 At the SOCC, combining of categories shall not be allowed.

4.3 Once a horse/rider combination competes three (3) times at a higher level, they may not drop back down.

SEC. 5.0 Equipment and Attire

5.1 Equipment

5.1.1 Horses will be shown in a bridle or halter depending on the class. Bridleless entries will not be allowed to show. Specific bit or reins are the rider's choice. Using one or two hands on a shank is allowed, but if you begin the class using one hand and switch to two hands, it may result in a lower score. Leg protection/bell boots are allowed. Any type saddle and any type bridle or bosal with mecate, side-pull, hackamore, "natural" hackamore properly tied is allowed. No bareback pads are allowed. It is the rider's responsibility to determine the appropriateness of his tack and to ensure that such tack is fitted and used properly.

5.1.2 The Event Management has the authority to require the removal of any piece of equipment or accoutrement which is unsafe or judged to be inhumane.

5.2 Clothing

5.2.1 While there is no specific dress code to compete in the Obstacle Challenge, boots or riding shoes with a heel are mandatory in all divisions including Assisted Rider assistants. ATSM/SEI approved Equestrian Helmets are optional for adults and mandatory for youth (17 and under), and Assisted Riders. Please consider that you are riding in a judged competition; appearance matters. You should present yourself and your horse as a neat and clean package with appropriate gear. Extra points will be not be awarded for silver or "show attire".

SEC. 6.0 Sanctioning Fees

6.1 All CSHA Obstacle Challenges shall charge a Sanction Fee. This fee shall be sent to the state office or Sanction Chair at least one (1) month before the challenge. Only Sanctioned Challenges shall count toward the SOCC eligibility.

6.2 The Sanction Fee will be \$25.00 per event.

6.3 Obstacle Challenges should not be scheduled to be held during a quarterly meeting weekend or the weekend of the annual convention.

6.4 If an outside organization is wanting to co-sanction their event and is not using the CSHA Obstacle Challenge Rules, they must submit their rules and sanction fees to the State Chairman for approval or rejection 90 days prior to the event. The Sanctioning Fee will only be deposited upon approval of the rules to be used. They must follow the rules on reporting the results and paying the rider fees.

SEC. 7.0 Challenge Event Manager Responsibilities

7.1 He will interpret state rules and will have the responsibility of making the final ruling.

7.2 He shall ride, or designate a rider, on horseback, the course and obstacles prior to the first competing rider.

7.2.1 Approval of the course design is contingent upon the obstacle instructions being category appropriate.

7.3 The Challenge Event Manager shall be available for instructing judges on their respective obstacles.

7.4 He shall have the authority to disqualify any participant from an obstacle, or if appropriate, from the entire ride for unsportsmanlike conduct or conduct that may reasonably result in physical harm to any person, animal or property.

SEC. 8.0 Region Responsibilities

8.1 To request sanctioning of an event, the Region Chairman must submit the appropriate sanction forms and fees to the State Sanctioning person.

8.2 In Regions without a Obstacle Challenge Chairman, the sponsoring person or club must submit the appropriate sanction forms and fees to the State Obstacle Challenge Sanctioning person and provide a copy to the Region President.

8.2.1 Region Chairmen may charge their program members a Region Obstacle Challenge Program registration fee for the region's Obstacle Challenge high point awards program. Each Region may charge what is necessary to accommodate the needs of its program members.

8.3 After a sanctioned Obstacle Challenge, the Region Chair shall provide the State Obstacle Challenge Sanctioning Chair with the following:

8.3.1 Within 7 days, a copy of the Official Ride Results Form with information filled out completely.

8.3.2 Within 10 days, one (1) check for all Obstacle Challenge Riders Fees collected. The check shall be made payable to CSHA with a note for Obstacle Challenge in the memo.

8.3.3 Failure to submit forms and fees postmarked by the required time period shall result in penalties equal to double the amount of the original fees.

8.3.4 In the event it becomes necessary to assess penalty fees and these fees are not paid, the club or region holding the ride shall not acquire Sanction Status on future rides until said fees are paid in full.

8.4 Regions shall not make changes to the State Obstacle Challenge rules. However, region programs are encouraged to develop rules that govern their year-end high point program.

8.5 Each Region Chairman will endeavor to prepare the participants in their region to compete at the SOCC.

8.6 By September 30th of the challenge year, the Region Chairman shall provide a list of their qualified riders including their category to the SOCC chairman. However, riders can qualify up to the last scheduled challenge and the Region Chairman can provide a late entry list (ten) 10 days prior to SOCC.

SEC. 9.0 State Obstacle Challenge Championship (SOCC)

9.1 During the pilot program, each area Northern, Central, and Southern shall hold their own championship. At the end of the three (3) year pilot program, this will revert into one (1) State Championship.

9.2 The SOCC Chairman shall be appointed on a rotating basis. The order of rotation shall be: Northern Region programs, Central Region programs, Southern Region programs and then back to Northern Region.

9.2.1 The SOCC Chairman shall endeavor to hold the championship at a location that is suitable for championship level competition.

9.3 Champion and Reserve Champion buckles shall be awarded to qualified riders placing first and second place in each category as budget allows and as set forth in Rule 4.1. In the event there is a tie for Champion or Reserve Champion, there will be no tie breaker, but instead a duplicate award will be created. This respects the fact that once someone has earned their way to state and achieved a performance worthy of either Champion or Reserve Champion, they should not be denied an award because of a tie breaker.

9.4 Appropriate awards shall be given to qualified riders placing third through sixth.

9.5 Eligibility

9.5.1 The rider must be a CSHA member (see CSHA Bylaws for a definition of member).

9.5.2 The rider must be registered to a Region Obstacle Challenge Program. If your region does not have an Obstacle Challenge Program, the rider may join another region's program

9.5.3 The rider must complete three (3) CSHA sanctioned Obstacle Challenges with the same horse in the same category within the ride year to be eligible to compete in the year-end SOCC.

9.6 The qualifying ride year is defined as November 1st through the 2nd weekend in October of each year.

9.7 There is no limit as to the number of times a horse and rider combination may become a CSHA State Obstacle Challenge Champion subject to the limitations in rule 4.0.

9.8 The SOCC Chairman shall publish the tie breaker protocol prior to the start of the SOCC for places third through sixth.

9.9 The State Chairman will remain in a neutral position in order to mediate any potential protest(s) that might arise from the SOCC.

SEC. 10.0 Protests

10.1 All protests relating to a CSHA Obstacle Challenge judge will be addressed to and handled by the Judges' Commission as set forth in the Judges' Commission Chapter.

10.2 All other protests must be filed in writing to the entity holding the Obstacle Challenge within forty-eight (48) hours after the conclusion of the event.

10.2.1 A fee of \$50.00 must accompany the protest and made out to CSHA with Obstacle Challenge Protest written in the memo and must be submitted to the State Committee Chairman.

10.2.2 The organization holding the Obstacle Challenge will immediately notify the Region Obstacle Challenge Chairman of the protest.

10.3 The Region Obstacle Challenge Chairman may form a committee to hear the protest or refer the protest to the State Obstacle Challenge Committee.

10.3.1 The Region Chairman must inform the State Chairman of the protest.

10.3.2 If the region has no Obstacle Challenge Committee, the Region President will refer the protest to the CSHA State Obstacle Challenge Committee. The Region President will attend the hearing.

10.4 The Obstacle Challenge Committee and Region Chairman will meet in person to conduct a hearing on the protest.

10.5 If the protest is upheld, the deposit will be returned. If the protest is overruled, the deposit will be forfeited to the State Obstacle Challenge Program.

10.6 The decision of the protest will be final and may not be appealed.

SEC. 11.0 Obstacles

There are generally ten (10) to sixteen (16) obstacles in any given Obstacle Challenge. In some cases, there may be one (1) obstacle incorporating several obstacles that flow together. Some obstacles should test if the partnership is able to trust each other. For example, if the obstacle is to rope a steer head, the object is not to judge the ability to rope the steer, but the patience the partnership gives to one another in completing the task at hand. Riders will complete obstacles in order they are laid out in the course instructions.

SEC. 12.0 Judging Standards

12.1 Riders Control: The rider must maintain control of the horse at all times. Rider's control of the horse is either while mounted or un-mounted.

12.1.1 While keeping control of the horse, riders must also maintain control of items needed to complete the obstacle such as, but not limited to, ropes, buckets, flags, gates, etc.

12.1.2 Cinch checks are not required.

12.2 On Course: The rider is to follow directions as given and stay on course. The participant must remain within the boundaries of the obstacle as marked. Avoiding or going outside marked boundaries constitutes being off course.

12.3 Coaching: It is the participant's responsibility to negotiate the obstacle on their own so a true test of their skills can be assessed. Once a participant has presented himself to the obstacle judge, there shall be no further contact by another person.

12.3.1 Coaching is defined as any verbal, gesture or implied assistance to a rider on course and executing the obstacle. Both coach and rider shall be given zero (0) points if coaching occurs, regardless of when the coaching occurs during the obstacle negotiation.

12.3.2 Only participants in the Assisted Rider category can be coached.

SEC. 13.0 Scoring Standards

13.1 Participants will be scored on negotiating the obstacles by utilizing an official score sheet as provided by the State Obstacle Challenge Committee

13.1.1 Obstacle assistants or helpers will not participate in the judging or scoring of the obstacles except when instructed to provide verification of an action/completion of the obstacle to the obstacle judge.

13.2 Scoring values will be assessed per obstacle as follows (the use of 1/2 points is acceptable):

- 10 = Perfect, no mistakes
- 9 = Minor mistakes
- 8 = A few mistakes
- 7 = Above Average
- 6 = Average
- 5 = Adequate job
- 4 = Obvious mistakes
- 3 = Skills need development
- 2 = Made an effort
- 1 = Skills not there
- 0 = Does not know how to do the obstacle

Scoring of 10

Perfect, no mistakes.

Scoring of 7 – 9

Above average performances should include (the more they are exhibited the higher the score):

- Rider should follow exact path and perform only obstacles indicated on the class pattern and/or set during the walk-through.
- Where possible, all obstacles should be entered and exited straight and precisely in the middle. Many obstacles such as log and rock piles require a meandering line and that should be taken into consideration, as should the horse that shows a degree of difficulty in handling a straight line.
- Unless otherwise required by the pattern, the horse should travel on a straight path through an obstacle with the least amount of guidance from the rider and maintain that line.
- Horse should carry his head low enough that he can see his path but not so low as to lose sight of his surroundings. Once the obstacle under his feet is accomplished, the horse should naturally pick his head up to check out his surroundings and track to the next obstacle with curiosity and intent.
- The rider should allow the horse enough rein to have the ability to get his head down so he may perform a task, but not so much rein that the rider loses the ability to control or help the horse if needed or the reins become in danger of getting entangled on the obstacle or the horse's legs.
- Once a horse is set on his path by the rider, he should maintain that path with little or no further guidance until asked for a change of direction or gait.
- The horse should maintain a smooth even cadence of gait where possible with little or no rider assistance. Rider should allow horse to adjust his own gait in an obstacle where it is necessary. The rider should not have to continually make adjustments themselves.
- The horse should be allowed to travel at his natural speed while showing the ability to take care of both himself and his rider. (keep in mind the natural travel speed in gaited horses, as well as the natural speeds due to various conformations in other breeds, i.e.; short strides vs. long strides, short legs on a tall log vs. long legs on a tall log).
- When a change of direction is required in an obstacle, the horse should show a willing attitude to accept the rider's instruction and have the ability to re-adjust his focus and feet to the new path.
- The horse places his feet clearly and confidently between obstacles such as rocks, logs, etc.
- The horse acknowledges and adjusts to various terrain quickly and clearly i.e. mud, water, sand, inclines, declines, ditches, etc.
- The horse shows the ability to acknowledge a scary obstacle but proceeds with willing caution and curiosity without compromising its calm, relaxed attitude and way of going (forward motion).
- There is no sign of hesitation, refusal, balk, or break of forward motion.

Scoring of 5-6 points

An average performance is evidenced by the horse and rider combination successfully completing the obstacle but exhibiting the following tendencies:

- Not entering an obstacle straight (where possible) or setting up for an obstacle incorrectly.
- Not maintaining a straight line through an obstacle where required or maintaining an even balance in an obstacle.
- A horse that occasionally has difficulty focusing on the rider's instruction and, at times, is slightly distracted.
- The horse frequently hits an obstacle with legs or feet such as logs or rocks (keep in mind that some obstacles in these types of events are so difficult to maneuver that a horse may have to place his feet on top of some logs or rocks to negotiate the obstacle at all).

Scoring of 1 – 4 points

Below average performances will be evidenced by (the more they are exhibited, the lower the score):

- Break of gait or erratic gait between and/or over obstacle.
- Rushing through obstacle or hurrying to finish and not maintaining an even cadence.
- When obstacle is partially completed, the score is not 0 but shall be a below average score on the part of obstacle completed.
- A horse that continually has difficulty maintaining his path and gait without continual guidance from rider. The horse is easily distracted.
- A rider excessively micro-managing the horse thus resulting in lack of obstacle ownership by horse.

Scoring of 0 points

A zero score will be given for an obstacle/task when:

- The obstacle is missed, refused 3 times, or the judge motions rider on due to equine/rider safety concern. The score shall be 0 on that particular obstacle only.
- Rider must memorize their pattern. While on course, no outside assistance or coaching is allowed. Judges cannot assist riders to stay on course. Zeroes will be given for obstacles that are not completed and in the order noted on the instructions.

13.3 Bypass: Bypass points will be assessed a value of 0 points.

13.3.1 It is the participant's responsibility to bypass any obstacle they deem as beyond their team's skill level. Safety and common sense should always be kept in the participant's mind.

13.4 Disqualify: Disqualification points will be assessed a value of 0. Any obstacle judge may disqualify a participant from their obstacle for safety reasons.

13.5 Refusal: Refusal points will be assessed a value of -1, -3, -6 to a total of 0 points.

13.5.1 If a horse refuses at an obstacle, the participant will be allowed a total of three attempts to complete. Each failed attempt will be assessed PENALTY POINTS.

1st attempt: -1 points

2nd attempt: -3 points

3rd attempt: -6 points

If the horse refuses a third time, the participant is dismissed from the obstacle. Total points shall be 0.

13.5.2 The definition of a refusal is a horse that moves their feet away from the obstacle in any direction. Looking and snorting are not considered refusals.

13.6 No Score: Should a rider quit a challenge due to injury to the horse or rider, or for any reason, a score of NS will be entered in the obstacle score on the Official Score Sheet and the total score for the rider shall indicate NS. Credit for the ride will not be given when the ride is not completed.

SEC. 14.0 JUDGES

14.1 Those judging the Obstacle Challenge course must be knowledgeable horsemen approved by the Event Manager and must have the ability to evaluate horsemanship skills, such as a rider's skill of controlling and maintaining the horse. Additionally, this person should be familiar with the natural movement of a horse. Holding any special judging card from AQHA or any other organization is not required, but those credentials should be taken into consideration.

14.2 The number of obstacle judges needed depends on the course, the number of obstacles and the availability in the area for qualified judges. Depending on the course, usually one (1) to three (3) judges are needed. Most courses tend to dictate the need for more than one (1) judge due to time constraints and topography.

Sec. 15.0 Course/Pattern

15.1 The course pattern and directions are provided during the rider walkthrough. Different patterns may be assigned to specific classes of the day. The patterns will change daily. You are strongly encouraged to memorize your pattern before you start your competition. Rider may carry map and directions during competition. **NO HORSES WILL BE ALLOWED ON THE COURSE PRIOR TO OR AFTER THEIR CLASS.**

15.2 Go Order: A Go Order will be posted each morning at the show office. The order will be followed. If the entry is not ready to go on time they may forfeit their entry fee. If you feel you will have overlapping classes, please notify the Event Manager prior to your go so arrangements can be made.

SEC. 16.0 Awards

Unless otherwise noted, you **MUST BE PRESENT** to pick up your awards. They will not be mailed.